



February is Heart Health Month. Heart disease is the leading cause of death for both men and women in the United States.

The good news? It is also one of the most preventable. Making heart-healthy choices, knowing your family health history and the risk factors for heart disease, having regular check-ups and working with your physician to manage your health are all integral aspects of saving lives from this often-silent killer.

Below are some tips to help you take care of your heart, as it takes care of you.

- **Eat A Healthy Diet**
A healthy diet can help you avoid heart disease and its complications. Be sure to eat meat and vegetables, nuts and seeds, some fruit, little starch, and no sugar. Ensure your diet is low in salt, saturated and trans fats and high in unsaturated fats (avocado, walnuts, fish, etc).
- **Take Your Fish Oil**
Fish oil is a form of omega-3 fatty acid that provides huge heart healthy benefits. Fish oil supports healthy cholesterol, boosts your mood, helps maintain strong bones, and reduces inflammation. Be sure to use a high quality fish oil. A good test of your fish

oil is to put it in the freezer, if it freezes, it is poor quality.

- **Exercise Regularly**
Engage in moderate physical activity for at least 30 minutes for up to five days per week. Physical activity, including weight lifting, are crucial in maintaining healthy weight, cholesterol levels, and blood pressure.
- **Maintain A Healthy Weight**
Being overweight or obese can significantly increase your risk for heart disease. The best way to determine if your weight is a healthy weight, visit your health professional for a body composition test. Unlike the body mass index (BMI), body composition tests will factor in fat, bone, water and muscle and are much more accurate than BMI.
- **Monitor Your Blood Pressure**
High blood pressure often has no symptoms, so be sure to have it checked regularly. Blood pressure screenings are super simple and readily available almost anywhere. High blood pressure greatly increases the risk of heart diseases.
- **Avoid Smoking, Recreational Drugs, and Alcohol**
Smoking greatly increases your risk for heart disease. If you do not smoke, do not start. If you do smoke, quit as soon as possible. There are several smoking cessation programs available to you. Check with your local health benefit coordinators for guidance.

Avoid drinking too much alcohol, which can increase your blood pressure. Try to imbibe no more than one drink per day.